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DEPARTMENT FOR AF, AF/SPG, D, INR, DRL, PRM

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SUBJECT: DARFUR PEACE TALKS: CEASE-FIRE TEXT AS STEPPING
STONE OR STUMBLING BLOCK?

REF: ABUJA 792

¶1. (SBU) Summary: The African Union Mediation presented the revised cease-fire document to international partners on April 4, hoping it will become a stepping stone to the final agreement. AU Chief Mediator Sam Ibok stated that the document could build momentum for the AU to table other elements of the comprehensive peace agreement by mid-month. He explained that the AU mediation was "deliberately not" tabling the power and wealth-sharing documents until it could assess how the parties consider the revised text. In what could be a turning point in the talks, if agreed upon, the GOS could use the text to prevent a UN transition from occurring by arguing that the cease-fire and AMIS are sufficient. If it is not agreed upon, the cease-fire document could lead to a blockage in the talks. The AU wants to use the April 8 mini-summit of heads of state to press the parties to modify their positions on other issues. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) The AU Mediation Team met with the international partners late evening April 4 to present the revised cease-fire document. AU Chief Mediator Sam Ibok explained that the AU hoped that the cease-fire document would build momentum for accomplishing the rest of the comprehensive agreement by the end of April. According to Ibok, the AU deliberately decided not to table the power and wealth-sharing elements of the comprehensive agreement. He explained that the AU security team resource persons felt the movements still do not understand key elements of the security arrangements, such as DDR and integration, and advised the AU to move incrementally. As a result, he said that the AU mediation decided not to confuse the situation by having too many elements on the table at the same time.

¶3. (SBU) The AU believes it can get agreement on the cease-fire and then, Ibok promised, however, that the mediation is "increasingly coming to a position to table all proposals soon". He said that the mediation will work with the parties on the cease-fire for a week and that the AU already has worked on text for the final security arrangements, which include DDR and integration. Ibok said that the mediation hoped to have the comprehensive package (power, wealth, and security) on the table by mid-April.

¶4. (SBU) Alex de Waal, an AU resource person on the security arrangements team, reviewed the document. Based on meetings with the parties, he said that the GOS can accept the document and it is "a good deal" for the movements. Nonetheless, there are a number of issues over which there is significant disagreement: the timing of verification of positions, GOS insistence on reciprocal withdrawal of movements to redeployment zones before it neutralizes the

janjaweed, the GOS insertion of provision which allows it to suspend parts of the agreement to defend its borders, policing of the IDP camps, a GOS-inserted provision for recognition of historic nomadic routes, and increased responsibilities for AMIS. The GOS also will likely object to a provision giving the cease-fire agreement primacy over the N'Djamena Accord.

15. (SBU) USDEL emphasized the importance of the cease-fire document drawing the process forward. The parties must see a common future and if the AU sees that the cease-fire document as widening the gap between the parties, it needs to get the other elements of the comprehensive deal on the table immediately. The movements, for example, will be hesitant to accept the document without knowing their future status, particularly conditions for disarmament and integration. The partners are fully supportive of the AU efforts, but cannot place the maximum amount of pressure on the parties without all the elements of the comprehensive deal in play.

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COMINGS AND GOINGS
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16. (SBU) AU Special Envoy Salim will brief members of the AU Peace and Security Council this week and then return to Abuja for the heads of state meeting. He will then proceed to New York to brief members of the United Nations Security Council. We are being told that Sudanese Vice President Ali Osman Taha will be arriving in Abuja on/about April 6 for six days. Ibok hoped the heads of state would give momentum to the process by pressing the parties to modify some of their positions.

ABUJA 00000737 002 OF 002

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COMMENT
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17. (SBU) The mediation views the cease-fire document, which it expects to put it to the parties on April 6, as a stepping stone to tabling the other elements of the peace deal. The risk of this approach, however, is significant, particularly if the cease-fire is used by the Government of Sudan to keep the UN out of Darfur and prevents agreement on a comprehensive peace deal. Wrangling over the cease-fire text without the full package in play could bog down the talks altogether. The AU said it will see how the parties react to the revised cease-fire over the next few days and then decide whether to put the rest of the comprehensive deal on the table. During today's session for international partners to provide their comments, USDEL will fully support the AU's efforts. We will press the mediation to move forward quickly if the parties get bogged down or refuse to accept the cease-fire without knowing the details of the final security, power, and wealth-sharing arrangements.
CAMPBELL